



**MAYOR'S COMMISSION ON WATER POLICY
REVIEW & MONITORING
MINUTES**

**MAYOR'S COMMISSION ON WATER POLICY
REVIEW & MONITORING
TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 2023
11:00AM – 12:00PM**

**City Hall, Council Chambers
201 S. Cortez St.
Prescott, Arizona 86303
928-777-1130**

**Minutes for the Mayor's Commission on Water Policy Review & Monitoring meeting held
March 21, 2023.**

1. Call to Order

Chairman Jim Lamerson called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Roll Call

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|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Phil Goode | Mayor – Excused |
| James (Jim) Lamerson | Chair – Present |
| Robert (Bob) Roecker | Vice Chair – Present |
| Gary Beverly | Member – Present |
| Gillian Haley-Meierbachtol | Member – Present (11:05 a.m.) |
| Peter Kroopnick | Member – Present |
| Michael Taylor | Member – Present |
| Gary Worob | Member – Present |

4. Discussion & Action Items

A. Approval of Minutes from February 12, 2023

MOTION BY MEMBER PETER KROOPNICK TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 12, 2023 MEETING MINUTES; MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER GARY WOROB PASSED [6-0]

B. Draft Recommendations

Staff Liaison Leslie Graser opened up discussion for the Draft Recommendations document. She explained that this meeting's goal was for members to review and elevate priority items that the commission determines are most important as a whole. The policy matrix document the commission has been utilizing with member comments was displayed. Ms. Graser continued, and discussed the process, which includes the succinct data in the document moving through to Council with high level items, and specific policies to be elevated.

Member Taylor commented that member Gary Beverly's comments were beneficial, especially with them being distributed to the commission members. Member Peter Kroopnick's comments were received as well, and copies of both provided were provided to members during the meeting. She agreed that a sampling of what other members have submitted would be beneficial.

Ms. Graser further discussed the policy matrix document. Just as members were requested to complete information and submit comments, the same information was requested of City staff. Per Ms. Graser, it appears that staff approached the subject of the Water Policy from a different direction than that of the commission members, which actually provides a benefit having both perspectives.

Following the matrix discussion, Ms. Graser presented the draft synopsis of recommendations for Council and asked of the commission if all comments received for each policy are requested, or if the focus shall be for more urgent matters.

Related to a staff comment on Policy 1, Member Kroopnick inquired about the Board of Adjustment. Ms. Graser deferred to Community Development Planner, Tammy DeWitt. Per Ms. DeWitt, the Board of Adjustment reviews conditional use permits or variances (setbacks, etc.), often through water applications coming through the site plan and other processes. Currently, the water application process includes review by the Board of Adjustment, review by Planning & Zoning, review by the Water Issues Subcommittee, then review by City Council. It may be helpful to have language added to the Water Policy explaining one planning process, rather than multiple processes.

Member Gillian Haley-Meierbachtol commented from the perspective of the construction industry. Per Ms. Haley-Meierbachtol, the administrative process has unintended effects that take place which may not be water related, and in some instances causes delays. Member Gary Worob requested clarification regarding the water application process. Per Ms. DeWitt, the site plan review and any application that goes through the Water Issues Subcommittee will go through the planning process if the request is over one acre foot. Public Works staff reviews the application, and if the request for water is over one acre foot the applicant is required to apply for a site plan. The site plan comes through Planning & Zoning, and then on to the Water Issues Subcommittee. If approved for recommendation by the Water Issues Subcommittee, it then goes before City Council.

Member Haley-Meierbachtol suggested Policy 2 be reviewed as far as administrative abilities, as it affects the process. Per Ms. DeWitt, there are some commercial applications that may be a little over one acre foot due to the landscaping portion. However, one of the General Plan questions, is the desire to become a tree city. The decreasing landscaping in order to fall below the one acre foot requirement is creating an issue with that. Member Haley-Meierbachtol added that there are a number of other checks and balances within City Code that address landscape issues, so reviewing Policy 2 is important.

Ms. Graser commented on landscaping in general related to the Water Policy, and pointed out that it runs through the various policies in different ways. She displayed the current low water use plant list and reference in City Code, and also explained that from regulatory standpoint, the requirement is to have low water plants in public right of ways. The reduction of landscaping requirement is a request, however, there are a lot of other interconnects affected. Chairman Lamerson opened up the topic of landscaping as it relates to the Water Policy for discussion.

Member Beverly commented that landscape water use is very large and appropriate to be considered in this policy, and the historical average is about 28% or 1800 acre feet per year applied seasonally. Ms. Graser displayed the chart provided by Member Beverly.

Member Beverly continued, and commented that with the Water Resource Management Model (WRMM), more data is available. However, since the 2022 Code, there hasn't been a lot of data to support whether or not it works or is effective. He continued, and said there was a strong possibility that people overwater or don't manage their water usage well. Specifying low water plants is not an adequate step on its own, and the City has GIS based water billing data and WRMM to better track. If the low water plant requirement doesn't work need, there must be an alternative option to replace it.

Member Worob commented that he supports member Beverly's comments. He added that a heat island effect is a concern with a lack of trees, and would like to see more rainwater harvesting and storm water harvesting. Using raised bed planters with rainwater running right past them instead of into them was an example of a situation that could be remedied.

Member Haley-Meierbachtol commented about influencing people's behavior, and the possibly to evaluate further. She compared a low flush toilet as a controlled behavior with landscaping not being a controlled behavior. She added that if there were a tool for people to use to understand their water usage, such as an app, it may prove beneficial. Member Beverly agreed with her comment, and stated that water controls need to be improved and monitored.

Vice Chairman Bob Roecker inquired about the City providing a list for low water/drought tolerant plants to nurseries? Per Ms. Graser, yes, conservation planning included that as part of a three year focus on outdoor watering. The current practices may be different now; however, conservation is always in water management conversation. There is a lot of social outreach and education involved to enact a change. Local nurseries have come a long way, compared to 12 years or so ago.

Member Kroopnick inquired about a process to track landscaping requirements through Code Enforcement, or a way to educate water users on what has been used and how they could improve. Ms. Graser responded and explained that auto metering is an option, and at some point, the City may need to review options further.

Member Taylor commented that he agreed with member Beverly, in that landscape water usage is a main focus. There are implications with any recommended updates or changes, therefore water aspects need to be addressed specifically. Chairman Lamerson commented on landscaping, and a concern with altering the landscape and changing the environment of Prescott. Member Beverly commented that it was a valid concern, however, there are benefits to altering the landscape to maximize water treatment and recharge.

Ms. Graser commented that landscaping is one of many topics. The intent at this meeting was to have recommendations, rather than focusing on one data set, like rainwater harvesting, for example. At the start of the commission meetings, the Water Policy from 2019 was compared with the new 2022 policy. Since then, the Water Policy versus a long term water plan was also discussed. If landscaping / seasonal water use patterns is one of the topics to be evaluated more, that can be done, however it may need to be at a later date.

The list of approved projects under existing contract list was displayed, and Ms. Graser discussed WRMM involvement. The disconnects within the WRMM and how that affects the current policy were explained by Ms. Graser, as well as state involvement and final plats, and the relationship to groundwater allowance.

A potential disconnect example would be if staff were not utilizing the WRMM. There needs to be consideration applied in how the WRMM relates to the Water Policy, as some City decisions don't necessarily align.

Member Worob referred to Ms. DeWitt and Community Development Planning Manager, George Worley, and inquired about approved recommendations from Council, and following that who in Planning & Zoning is set up to monitor or implement the recommendations. Mr. Worley responded, and explained that there are often multiple places to monitor, and nothing is static. People sometimes change the landscaping from the original, for a new purchase for example. However, monitoring would require staff in the field as well. He concluded by commenting that some monitoring we have control of, and some we do not. Ms. Graser agreed, and added that another example would be a retired couple selling their home to a family of five. Staff must be mindful of such changes and closely monitor community changes to their best abilities.

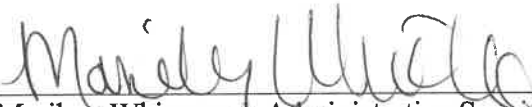
Expanding on monitoring, Ms. Graser discussed the current water obligations of the City. When the monitoring practices were changed in 2017/2018, there were over 600 contracts. Some disconnects were created with the 2019 Water Policy changes. There used to be water service agreements that moved to contract status. Currently, there are water service applications. A future option may include a long term water plan, however, there are many elements involved.


C. Next Meeting's Materials

Ms. Graser requested of the commission to please provide comments and feedback for recommendations as soon as possible if they have not been submitted already.

The next meeting will take place on April 18, 2023 at 11:00 a.m., in the new Council Chambers located at the new City Hall building 201 N. Montezuma Street, third floor.

5. There being no further items to discuss, Chairman Lamerson adjourned the meeting at 12:07 p.m.


Marikay Whisenand, Administrative Specialist


Jim Lamerson, Chairman

Date: 4/18/23